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FEBRUARY MEETING, 1907.

THE stated meeting was held on Thursday, the 14th instant, at three o'clock P. M.; the President in the chair. The record of the last meeting was read and approved, and the Librarian read the list of donors to the Library. In the absence of the Corresponding Secretary in consequence of illness, the Recording Secretary said that letters had been received from Mr. Jonathan Smith and Hon. James Phinney Baxter, respectively acknowledging their elections to Resident and Corresponding membership; and that a letter had also been received from Capt. Alfred T. Mahan, D.C.L., expressing his appreciation of the honor done him in transferring his name from the Corresponding to the Honorary list. The Cabinet Keeper gave a brief oral report as to the services rendered by Mr. William S. Appleton in the arrangement of the important collection of coins and medals given to the Society by his father's will. It was voted that the thanks of the Society be sent to Mr. Appleton for his valuable services in this matter.

Mr. Albert Matthews, of Boston, was elected a Resident Member.

Hon. SAMUEL A. GREEN said he had received information of the death of Alexander Brown, D.C.L., of Nelson County, Virginia, a Corresponding Member, which occurred at his home August 29, 1906.

The PRESIDENT read the following paper:—

Before passing to the section of the day, there is a matter, somewhat personal to myself, to which I would like to make reference, with a view of leaving a memorandum in relation thereto on file, as it were, in the Proceedings of this Society.

On the 19th of last month, upon the invitation of the President, Board of Trustees, and Faculty of the Washington and Lee University, I delivered an address at Lexington, Virginia, on the Centennial of the birth of General Robert E. Lee,

then widely observed. The observance at Lexington was one of exceptional interest, and, I may add, to me personally of enjoyment; but as, in the notices of the occasion, considerable emphasis was laid upon the fact that, in addition to being the principal speaker, I was also President of this Society, it seems not inappropriate that some mention of it should be here made. I am, moreover, the more impelled to such mention from the fact that, owing to the peculiar circumstances of the case, it seems not improbable that the address there delivered may be recollected somewhat longer than is usual with such efforts.

For a Massachusetts man, and the President of the Massachusetts Historical Society, to be urged to go to Virginia there to deliver the address on such an occasion before the University over which General Lee presided at the time of his death, certainly has its unusual features. If nothing else, it is suggestive of the great change worked by the lapse of time. The invitation to prepare this address reached me some months ago, immediately after my return from a summer passed in Europe. I felt great reluctance at the thought of assuming the task. Not only had I already delivered a kindred address on the same subject, but I had made up my mind to do no more work of this occasional character. No one who has not been more or less frequently thus called upon appreciates what a dissipation of force it involves; in the present case, I can say without exaggeration, the preparation, delivery, and subsequent correspondence growing out of the effort have consumed no less than three months of my time. I accordingly at once declined the invitation, frankly stating my reasons for so doing. My action was not, however, accepted as final. The invitation was renewed; and renewed in such a way that I felt, rightly or otherwise, that to persist in a refusal would be, to say the least, ungracious. Accordingly I took the matter under further advisement; and, after some weeks of anxious reflecting, most reluctantly, and not without grave misgivings freely expressed, indicated my acceptance. And, now that it is all over, I cannot pretend that I regret having assumed either the labor or the risk my acceptance involved. As I have said, the occasion was, to me at least, thoroughly and exceptionally enjoyable. Lexington is a quiet Virginia town, situated in what is known as the Upper Valley,

in the extreme southwestern part of the present State. It so chanced that while during the War of Secession I campaigned with the commands to which I was attached to and fro over a very large portion of what is known as the "Old Dominion," and though I had repeatedly been in the Shenandoah valley, I yet had never got so far up that valley as Rock-bridge County. Lying immediately between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies, the country thereabouts is mountainous, and extremely picturesque. Lexington, moreover, is only a dozen miles or so from the famous Natural Bridge; and though, because of the season of the year, I did not visit the Bridge, I yet felt under strong inducement so to do. In fact, when I came away, I looked upon it as simply a pleasure deferred. The population of that region is, too, curiously and obviously interesting. It is made up almost exclusively of that strong Scotch-Irish Presbyterian type of which the two Jacksons, Andrew, of Tennessee, and "Stonewall," of our Civil War fame, seem natural products. I found myself at once sensible of something extremely attractive in such a community dwelling in such a locality. It was distinctly a survival. In contact with it one seemed to leave behind the material, bustling, millionaire environment of our more metropolitan life, and become instinctively conscious of a new atmosphere, and a very refreshing atmosphere,—an atmosphere of quiet, of simplicity, of a certain earnestness and devotion to ideals and conditions—religious, economical, and conventional—belonging to another time. It so chanced also that during the three days I was at Lexington the weather was of the most perfect character,—the best of Virginian winter,—clear, but neither cold nor debilitating. The air was exhilarating; there was no frost in the ground; there were no indications of snow upon the hills; sleeping or waking, one felt the invigorating influence of a genial mountain region. I may also add that, from beginning to end, so far as I personally was concerned, the experience was marred by no single untoward incident. No act or word left behind it even in the slightest that unpleasant flavor in the mouth so apt in some way to make itself felt as one result of occasions of the sort.

Passing, however, at once to the memorandum in relation to this affair which I wish now to put on file, I have a word

to say, in connection with the origin and reason of my address. More than once I have been questioned as to what caused me to entertain so high an opinion of General Lee, and to express so frequently and emphatically the regard I felt for him. As usual in such cases, my feeling has been attributed to altogether wrong causes. I can truthfully assert that never, either during the War of Secession or subsequently thereto, until a comparatively recent date, had my attention been peculiarly drawn to General Lee, his character, his motives, or his conduct. In fact, I had been somewhat inclined to question the high place among the world's great military characters accorded him by foreign critics, and to consider that somewhat scant justice had been done those opposed to him, and under whom it was my fortune to serve. But, feeling no peculiar regard, much less admiration, for General Lee, no occasion had arisen for expressing myself concerning him, one way or the other. The matter, however, presented itself to my thought in an entirely new light in the autumn of 1901, more than twenty-five years after the close of the War, and when Lee had been for a quarter of a century dead. It was during the Boer troubles in South Africa, and in consequence of them. It will be remembered that, after the operations of Lord Roberts resulting in the capture of Pretoria, the South African struggle was almost interminably prolonged. It became apparently a question of utter extermination on the one side, or of exhaustion on the other; an altogether deplorable alternative, the outcome is now matter of history. That outcome presented nothing in any way commendable, either as a condition or as an example.

While in the autumn of 1901 we were receiving almost daily bulletins from the other side bearing upon this state of affairs, I could not help observing that the condition of things — the irregular warfare — there prevailing was very much what would have prevailed with us after April, 1865, but for what then did actually occur, and for which Lee was, at Appomattox, responsible. So much was I impressed with this thought that I felt moved to call attention to it. It so chanced that a meeting of the American Antiquarian Society was at that time about to be held. Acting under a sudden impulse, I prepared a short paper, entitled "Lee at Appomattox," which I read before that Society at its meeting in

Worcester on Wednesday, October 30. The paper attracted attention, and was printed in full in the Springfield "Republican"; from which paper it was copied into the New York "Tribune." In the columns of the "Tribune" it came to the attention of the London "Times," which reproduced it in full with editorial comments, commending Lee's course and example in 1865 to the South African leaders of 1901. Thus brought into public notice, my paper was widely reprinted in Great Britain and commented upon, until finally Mr. Chamberlain alluded to it in some detail, and in somewhat striking way, in one of his elaborate defences of the ministry in a House of Commons debate. Republished in London in pamphlet form, the paper next found its way to South Africa, and there contributed to a certain extent towards bringing about the result subsequently reached. A year later I elaborated my paper in a Phi Beta Kappa oration delivered at the University of Chicago on Tuesday, June 17, 1902.¹ It was the memory of this Phi Beta Kappa address which subsequently led to the invitation of last autumn from the Washington and Lee University.

The point, however, I wish to make, is that the claim advanced by me on Lee's behalf to the consideration of the American people, both North and South, did not in any way depend upon his fame as a Confederate military commander, upon the hold he had upon the Southern community, or on the general respect felt towards him as a man. In connection with my utterances all this cut no figure. The single point I made, and which I emphasized, rested on Lee's essential contribution to the welfare of the common country in the course taken by him at Appomattox; and, subsequently, in the example he set to his compatriots during the period of reconstruction, and up to the time of his death. That attitude then seemed to me, as it now seems, to have been not only inspired by the loftiest motive, and carried forward with a consistency beyond praise, but its actual results were of inestimable value to the country, North as well as South. And in this estimate all must, I think, concur.

Finally, if there was one thing connected with the War of Secession creditable to the American people, and from which

¹ Both paper and oration were reprinted in the second edition of the volume entitled "Lee at Appomattox and other Papers" (Boston, 1902).

an historical lesson of the greatest possible value may be derived, it was the restoration of peace and good feeling after the close of strife, and in spite of the disasters of reconstruction largely incident to the assassination of Lincoln. It all came about, moreover, in the lifetime of a generation. Although marred in the active period by acts of temper and misjudgment, and a mistaken effort at reconstruction which has now been abandoned, those results, taken as a whole, merit and have received a verdict of general approval. It has all passed into history. Everything, however, at one moment depended on General Lee, and the course to be taken after organized Confederate resistance in the field was brought to an end. Such organized resistance was impossible after April, 1865. On the other hand, a disorganized resistance such as was seen in South Africa was confidently predicted and altogether possible. Had it been attempted the result would have been simply appalling. That it was not attempted was due to Lee more than to any or all other persons or influences combined; and, subsequently, the advice he gave and the example he set to his fellow countrymen on both sides were of prime consequence and of inestimable value. As I said in the course of my address (p. 49):—

“The service Lee [in this connection] rendered to the common country, the obligation under which he placed us, whether of the North or South, has not, I think, been always appreciated; and to overstate it would be difficult. Again to put on record my estimate of it brings me here to-day.”

And hereafter, when question may possibly be raised why, the President of this Society, I went to Virginia to say what I there said, I wish it to be distinctly understood it was in recognition of the attitude assumed by Lee at Appomattox, and of the precepts he afterwards inculcated, and, by example, enforced. My presence at Lexington had no connection with Lee, the military commander, nor was it in any degree due to the respect I might feel for him as a man, or my sense of the high standard of character maintained by him both in his earlier and in his later life. All that was merely incidental.

In what I said I carefully disavowed being there in any representative character so far as this Society was concerned; but none the less I would like to have this explanation of my

real reason for going appear as of record in the Proceedings of the Society.

Mr. Charles C. Smith communicated by title the following paper drawn up by Hon. DANIEL H. CHAMBERLAIN, who was absent on account of continued ill health : —

A Great Historical Acquisition — The Stevens Catalogue-Index of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress.

The last Annual Report (1906) of the Librarian of Congress makes the first official announcement of the purchase by the Library of Congress of the monumental Index, compiled by the late Benjamin Franklin Stevens, of all the manuscripts in the archives of England, France, Holland, and Spain relating to America.

This Report (pages 27-31) describes the Index with due fulness, but it seems desirable that a special notice of its acquisition, with some account of interesting incidents connected with its acquisition, should appear also in the Proceedings of this Society. These incidents were not known to the Librarian of Congress, — probably all of them to no one except the writer, — but are believed to have interest warranting their record here.

A word first as to the origin, character, and scope of the Index.

Benjamin Franklin Stevens was a native of the State of Vermont, who in early life settled in London, where he was domiciled during the rest of his life. Naturally gifted with a taste for historical research, he for many years was engaged in examining the historical manuscript collections of England and the Continent. This led to his frequent employment for years in locating and copying manuscript documents, generally relating to America, for American historical societies and historical students, and for the United States government. Some thirty years ago he conceived the plan of indexing all manuscripts relating to America scattered through the voluminous archives of England and the Continent.

His plan for executing this conception seems an admirable one. By it each title in the Index appears three times, — *first*, in what is called the "Catalogue," where the titles appear in the order of their arrangement in the original archives ; *second*,

in what is called the "Chronological Index," where the titles are arranged in strict chronological order with brief abstracts of the contents of each document; and *third*, in what is called the "Alphabetical Index," where the titles are arranged alphabetically according to the names of the writers, or according to the subject-matter if no name is known.

By the help of this exhaustive scheme one can hardly go astray in one's search or fail to find the document desired.

Besides this, the whole Index is externally a work of high art. Of it Professor Charles M. Andrews, the accomplished Professor of Modern European History at Bryn Mawr College, says:—

"The volumes are bound in full Morocco, the Catalogue in full blue crushed Levant Morocco, the Chronological Index in full red crushed Levant Morocco, and the Alphabetical Index in full brown crushed Levant Morocco."

The Catalogue consists of 50 volumes, the Chronological Index of 100 volumes, the Alphabetical Index of 30 volumes, making in all 180 volumes, the contents being beautifully written on hand-laid paper specially made for the purpose.

It is, as Professor Andrews further remarks, "a monument of industry and accuracy, and a source of information indispensable to the student of the later period of colonial history."

One visiting the Library of Congress should not fail to see these volumes for their mechanical beauty, if for nothing else.

This work was completed in 1903. Mr. Stevens hoped, though he had no contract or understanding to that effect, that the work would be purchased by the United States government. As usual in such cases, the government did nothing, though all acknowledged the vast merit and utility of the work, this being specially dwelt upon by our successive ministers and ambassadors in London, Mr. Lowell, Mr. Phelps, and Mr. Bayard.

From 1903 to 1904 no progress was made towards acquiring the work. In the meantime Mr. Stevens had died, and his executors had succeeded to the ownership and control of the work. In the summer of 1904 our late Corresponding Member, the Hon. William Ashmead Courtenay, of South Carolina, who was fully acquainted with the work, while in London consulted with the Stevens executors as to the terms

of sale, etc., and finding that Dr. Billings of the Astor-Lenox-Tilden Library of New York was in negotiation for its purchase, he drew the attention of two or three friends strongly interested in the matter, among these the writer, to the danger that the Index might not go to Washington, where, in their judgment, it ought to be placed as the most central point for those likely to use it.

The writer ascribes the success of the final movement for the purchase of the Index to the initiative and impulse thus given to the matter by Mr. Courtenay in 1904.

Thereupon a plan was matured in 1906 by five gentlemen, including Mr. Courtenay, Professor Andrews, and the writer, to bring the matter directly before Congress for an appropriation, the price of the work as fixed by Mr. Stevens and his executors being \$100,000.

Meantime Mr. Henry J. Brown, Chairman of the Stevens executors, was induced to come to New York for conference; and upon his arrival negotiations were opened with Mr. Putnam, Librarian of Congress.

Fortunately Mr. Putnam had a sum of money available for the purchase of the Index at a considerably reduced price, and in July, 1906, a sale was effected to the Library of Congress, and the great work is now safely housed in its only proper abiding-place.

Those who were specially watching the fate of the Index and saw the difficulty of securing the attention of Congress to a matter of purely historical interest and scholarship, as well as the danger that the work might go elsewhere than the seat of the government, were thus relieved of no small anxiety as well as a large pecuniary risk which they had resolved to assume in order to hold the Index until they could make their special appeal to Congress.

Writing officially to Mr. Frelinghuysen, Secretary of State, in 1882, Mr. Lowell, after referring to Mr. Stevens's work as covering "all documents relating to our Revolutionary history which are to be found in public archives or private cabinets, whether in this country [England] or on the Continent," said: "Without classification or index as they now are, they can hardly be said to exist at all."

Those who have worked in these unclassified and unindexed collections know best how true are Mr. Lowell's words; but

even to one who, like the writer, has only looked in upon them, for example, the Public Records Office collections, or the Lansdowne collection, which is perhaps the best arranged collection in London, or even the collection relating to America, now in the British Museum, will feel that it is impossible to exaggerate the value of this acquisition of our Library of Congress or to be too grateful that no one of many possible accidents or chances diverted it from its rightful destination.

Mr. Smith also communicated for Hon. WINSLOW WARREN a note as follows, correcting an error in the address of a letter found among the Winslow Papers, and printed in 2 Proceedings, vol. iii. pp. 67, 68:—

My attention has been called by Mr. D. M. Matteson, of Cambridge, who is engaged upon an index of our Proceedings, to an error for which I may be in some degree responsible. It dates some years back, yet for historical accuracy it is well that it should be corrected.

It appears that at a meeting at the house of our late associate Mr. Charles Deane, in June, 1886, a bundle of Winslow papers was referred to me for report to the Society. At the next meeting, in October, the record shows that I made a report, and stated that among other letters was one from Governor John Wentworth to Edward Winslow, Senior, dated June 5, 1785, and the letter was printed in our Proceedings.

Edward Winslow, who was a very prominent loyalist and fled with the refugees, died in June, 1784, so that this letter could not have been written to him unless there was a mistake in the date or of the printer, or unless Governor Wentworth was in ignorance of his decease the year previous. That it was not written to Edward Winslow, Junior, who was equally prominent in station, is evident from the fact that he is referred to in the letter.

In a volume of the Winslow Papers published by the New Brunswick Historical Society in 1901, a volume full of historical interest, I find this identical letter addressed by Governor Wentworth to Ward Chipman of the same date, June 5, 1785. Ward Chipman was another prominent loyalist, a protégé of Jonathan Sewall, in whose family he lived for some years, who fled to Annapolis, Nova Scotia, and subse-

quently to Halifax, and became Solicitor General of New Brunswick. He was very intimate with the Winslow family and a warm friend, and it is not unlikely that he was visiting Edward Winslow, Junior, when the letter was received, and that this letter with others not addressed to the Winslows in some way remained in their possession.

The original letters are not in the possession of the Society, so that I cannot now verify it; but as it is not addressed at the beginning nor at the end to any one by name, it is highly probable that it was endorsed on the back as from Governor Wentworth to Edward Winslow and accepted as such in my investigation.

There can be no doubt, however, that the original was written to Ward Chipman, and our record should be so corrected.

Hon. Samuel A. Green read the following paper for Mr. CHARLES H. HART, of Philadelphia, a Corresponding Member:—

Paul Revere's First Ride (December 17-27, 1773).

A little more than a year ago there was published in Boston a small volume entitled "The True Story of Paul Revere," by Charles Ferris Gettemy, which, unfortunately following the trend of most of the recent volumes of "*True*" biographies, seems to have been written chiefly to disparage and belittle its subject, without giving new facts to warrant the treatment. The historical statements were taken mostly from the Life of Revere, published in 1891, by Elbridge H. Goss, of Melrose, Massachusetts; but in reading Mr. Gettemy's book I noticed in an important point a wide divergence from Mr. Goss.

Paul Revere has very aptly been called "The Messenger of the Revolution"; but his famous midnight ride, immortalized by Longfellow in verse, has hidden from common view his several earlier and not less important missions. His first ride on public business was to carry to New York and Philadelphia, for the Boston Committee of Correspondence, the news of the destruction of the tea in Boston Harbor, on December 16, 1773. Revere left Boston on the morning of Friday, December 17, and arrived in New York on the night of Tues-

day, December 21. Holt's "New York Journal or the General Advertiser," of Thursday, December 23, says:—

"Tuesday night an Express arrived here from Boston, who left it on Friday last and brings Sundry letters among which are the following. 'Boston 17th December 1773. The Bearer is chosen by the Committee from a number of Gentlemen who offered themselves to carry you this intelligence.'"

And then follows the important advice. Mr. Gettemy says (page 52):—

"The news he brought soon spread among the New Yorkers. . . . They proclaimed their enthusiastic approval of what the Bostonians had done *and sent the exciting news on to Philadelphia.*"

This was an assertion that Revere had not himself taken "the exciting news on to Philadelphia," but that the New York Sons of Liberty, to whom it was addressed, had sent it forward. On this point Mr. Goss says (page 131), "*Revere reached Philadelphia the day after Christmas,*" which was a positive statement that Revere had himself carried the news; but the Philadelphia papers show that the news reached there the day *before* Christmas, so that Mr. Goss's "after," I supposed to be a slip of the pen for "before." Neither Gettemy nor Goss gives any details or authority to sustain these respective statements.

The two Philadelphia newspapers of the period, "The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser" and "The Pennsylvania Gazette," each issued "Postscripts," or, as we would call them, Extras, on "Friday Evening, Five o'clock, December 24, 1773," announcing:—

"At two o'clock this afternoon arrived in this city a Gentleman who came express from New York, with the following interesting advices from Boston, which were sent there by Express also. Which advices were received here with general satisfaction. On its being read to a crowded audience at the Coffee House, a loud shout of applause was given and the bells immediately set to ringing."

In the next regular issues of these papers, on the 29th, the news was republished with this explanation:—

"The following was published in a Postscript, last Friday, but fearing those might get lost, we have thought it best to publish it in the body of the paper."

Revere's name of course is not mentioned in either the New York or Philadelphia newspaper report, as he was at that time unknown, being merely the trusted messenger of the Boston Committee, chosen doubtless because he had been a chief actor in the stirring affair and could add to the brief written despatch a verbal statement of a participant. He was then just on the threshold of his fortieth year, and had yet to win his place in the hall of fame; and it is to set this one point in his career straight that I have entered the lists.

In 1773, by post road from Boston to New York was two-hundred and seventy miles, and from New York to Philadelphia ninety-seven miles, or a total distance of three hundred and sixty-seven miles. The time of year of Revere's first ride was the period of the briefest daylight, yet he accomplished his ride to New York within five days, from Friday morning to Tuesday night, or an average of fifty-four miles a day. For him to have taken a night's rest and then rode on to Philadelphia, reaching there at two o'clock in the afternoon of December 24, would appear a not difficult accomplishment, for this would have been close on to eight days from Boston, and we know that he did ride from Boston to Philadelphia, in May of 1774, in six days, leaving Boston on the 14th and reaching Philadelphia on the 20th, getting back to Boston again on the 28th; and likewise, the following September, he left Boston on the 11th and made Philadelphia, six days later, on the 17th; so that, with his powers of endurance, notwithstanding the season of the year, it was quite possible for him to have carried the news to Philadelphia within the time named. The determination, therefore, as to whether Revere did, or did not, personally carry the news to Philadelphia, depends upon when Revere got back to Boston from this errand.

Thomas Newell entered in his diary, under date of December 28, 1773, "Last evening Mr. Paul Revere returned here from New York."¹ If this entry were correct, it was plain that one hundred and thirty-three years ago not even Paul Revere could get from Philadelphia to Boston in three days. To test the accuracy of Mr. Newell's diary, I turned to the Boston newspapers, which not only confirmed the date of Revere's return, as on December 27, but affirmatively nega-

¹ Proceedings of Mass. Hist. Soc., vol. xv. p. 347.

tived the proposition that Revere himself carried the news to Philadelphia. "The Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Weekly News Letter"¹ of Thursday, December 30, 1773, says:

"Boston December 30. The Express that went from hence the Friday afternoon after the Destruction of the Tea, arrived at New York, on Tuesday following and *returned back last Monday Evening* [27th] performing his journey in a shorter time than could be expected at this season of the Year. We learn that when the Inhabitants of that City received the Intelligence, they were in high Spirits. . . . That they highly extolled the Bostonians for what the People had done here; and *immediately forwarded the Account to Philadelphia. Our Informant left the City* after the Papers were printed which contained the foregoing Article under the New York Head."

This then seems to settle the question finally that Paul Revere *did not ride to Philadelphia* with the news of the destruction of the tea in Boston Harbor in December of 1773.

In connection with some brief remarks on the approaching centenary of the birth of Henry W. Longfellow, Mr. T. W. HIGGINSON read the following letter:—

AUGUSTA [MAINE], Jan. 13, 1882.

DEAR SIR, — Your letter of the 9th instant has been received, and I do not think that I can give you an adequate answer to your inquiries. Professor Packard can, I believe, give you a better idea of Professor Longfellow's college life and appearance than any other person.

My recollection is that he entered college a sophomore, and that I was examined with him to enter Old Bowdoin in the same class.

He was then quite young, with a slight, erect figure, a remarkably fair and delicate complexion with the bloom of health, clear blue eyes, an intelligent and pleasing expression of countenance, and a good head covered with a profusion of rather light brown hair.

He was an agreeable companion, kindly and social in his manner, rendering himself dear to his associates by his disposition and deportment.

Pure in his tastes and morals, his character was without a stain.

As a scholar, while indulging in general reading and occasionally flirting with the muses, he always came to the recitation room so thoroughly prepared in his lessons that he placed himself in the front rank in the large and able class of 1825; and on graduating he received one of the three English orations assigned to that class for the

¹ In the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

Commencement exercises, — the *English* Oration then, and for more than thirty years afterward, outranking the *Latin* in that College.

In the recitation room he was greatly superior to his subsequently illustrious classmate Hawthorne, who often came so poorly prepared in his lessons that he was one of the twelve in a class of thirty-eight to whom no part was assigned at Commencement.

Hawthorne (then spelt Hathorne) was in college a peculiar and rather remarkable young man — shy, retiring, fond of general reading, busy with his own thoughts, and usually alone or with one or two of his special friends, Pierce (afterwards President) and Horatio Bridge of Augusta.

It is a remarkable fact in Hawthorne's history as an author that after he had left the manuscript for his first volume with Mr. Goodrich for publication, Mr. Bridge had occasion to enquire why the issue of it was delayed, and was told by Mr. G. that as the author was unknown he needed some guaranty against loss. Mr. B. therefore gave his guaranty, unknown to Hawthorne.

Had he been apprised of Mr. Goodrich's refusal, with his sensitive nature, he would have been likely to have withdrawn and burnt the manuscript; and, possibly, the world would have lost the fruits of his rare genius.

Very truly yours,

JAMES W. BRADBURY.

PÈTER THACHER, Esq.

Mr. NORTON, after referring to the fact that very nearly twenty-five years had passed since he spoke at the meeting of the Historical Society held immediately after Longfellow's death, went on to speak at some length concerning the character of the poet and of his poems and of the nature of the criticisms to which during his lifetime and even at the present day his poetry has been exposed. With the progress of the years the admirable art of Mr. Longfellow's verse has become more generally recognized, and his position among the poets as the one who has most fully expressed the sentiment and the ideals of the American people seems to be secure.

Mr. WILLIAM R. THAYER, having been called on, read the following paper : —

Longfellow Our National Poet.

The discussion of the greatness of poets sometimes seems as irrelevant as that of the altitude of the mountains. What does it matter that Mont Blanc towers three miles into the air, and

Snowdon only three-quarters of a mile, while Ben Lomond is lower still? To Welshmen Snowdon is the monarch of mountains, and so to Scotchmen is Ben Lomond, and round each circles a wealth of associations which could not be finer or dearer were the peak itself as high as Chimborazo. This is true also of national poets, in whose presence criticism by triangulation is often an intrusion. Scotland accepts Robert Burns as her idol, and all your efforts to show up the thin and uneven patches in his verse will avail nothing. Scotland knows that he has great qualities, too, bird notes, exquisite lyric utterances, of passion and regret; Scotland accepts him entire, and will not thank you for pointing out a lame verse or a doggerel rhyme. In other words, there are things deeper than criticism; or at least there are occasions when criticism is out of place.

Every year that passes makes it more evident that Longfellow has come to be the American national poet in much the same sense that Burns is the Scotch national poet. We have drawn far enough away from him and his contemporaries to be able to see clearly that he possesses the national quality to a degree to which none of the others attained. Bryant, Whittier, Emerson, and Lowell had patriotism and the moral outlook in common with him; Bryant and Lowell, like Longfellow, dipped occasionally into European sources; Whittier, like Longfellow, immortalized some of our local or national events; all loved Nature, all observed her accurately and described her sympathetically, — Nature as she reveals herself to a New Englander. But if you compare their work with his, you will perceive that Longfellow has a representative character which they lack, and a certain something which recommends him to a larger variety of tastes than they can satisfy.

Numbers predicate nothing, of course, as to merit. So the charge used to be made, and one hears it still, that Longfellow owed his immense popularity to his commonplaceness. But the true deduction to be made from his popularity leads in the other direction. Longfellow is popular, not because of his commonplaceness, but because of his art, which has raised millions of his readers above the commonplace. The same domestic sentiment, the same moral precept, the same patriotic desire had been expressed, it may be, many times; he expressed it in the way peculiar to him — the way which added

beauty or charm — and it became idealized to them, and his poetic description of it passed current as a household word. That is what I mean in calling him so much more widely representative than, let us say, Lowell or Whittier. Sixty thousand copies of "Evangeline" are reported to have been sold within two months of its publication. Shall we argue from that a triumph of the commonplace, a riot of Philistinism? Far from it; those figures prove the genius of the poet who by his art — delicate and sincere art, sweet art, if ever there were such — could commend a poem of that excellence to so large a multitude of strangers. In other words, a potential appreciation of poetry is latent in a much wider circle than we commonly suppose. Longfellow struck a responsive chord in myriads who were dumb to other singers: that was because of his magic gift, not of his commonplaceness.

Numbers, let us repeat, give no hint as to excellence; and yet, when multitudes love a certain poet and keep on loving him after the bloom of novelty has worn off, the fact of numbers may mean a great deal. It may mean, for instance, that he has universality; that is, that he can describe some of the primal human concerns in such fashion that every one recognizes him as a true spokesman. Now this is exactly what Longfellow did: he uttered our American ideals in poetry which had a national flavor. Nothing could be more genuinely Yankee than Lowell's "Biglow Papers," nothing more unalloyedly Puritan than many of Whittier's poems, and yet the poetry of Lowell and Whittier is too strongly individualized, too obviously limited by the personal idiosyncrasy of each, ever to be national as Longfellow's poetry is national.

Longfellow sang not only the ideals of the Settlers and the Founders — Liberty, Independence, Union, and Democracy were still the national watchwords when he began to write, although Union was soon to be tested in the fiery furnace — but to them were being added others, not so much civic and political as social and individual. Our long isolation, which had permitted us to become Yankees instead of Englishmen and to be free instead of subjects of the British Crown, was being broken up. Immigration on a large scale had begun, and it was slowly to change the nature of our racial stock. The American, ceasing to be nine-tenths Anglo-Saxon, was be-

coming truly cosmopolitan. Henceforth Latin and Teuton, Scandinavian and Slav, must contribute their ingredients to the composite American character. Now Longfellow, beyond all other Americans, knew the spirit of those peoples through their literatures, and by translating many of their poems and by retelling many of their favorite stories he prepared the way for some sort of sympathetic meeting when the strangers began to pour into the United States. The service which he rendered to our culture by infusing into it strains from the Continental reservoirs has been freely acknowledged, but his even greater service as spokesman of the New American has been almost overlooked. That New American is by inheritance a cosmopolite; it required a poet of cosmopolitan culture and sympathy to be his spokesman. Here, again, Longfellow displays the trait of universality which makes him of all our poets the most accessible to our oldest and youngest citizens alike. We may well be grateful that our new populations can through him come to know our ideals of duty, service, dignity, courage, self-sacrifice, kindness, friendship, affection, and patriotism; for it is, after all, on these primary virtues and affections that the character of man and nation must be built. This also stamps him as our national poet.

Several causes have led the professional literary critics to neglect or belittle Longfellow. Since 1860 literature has ceased to be systematic. Passions and topics once deemed unfit for literary treatment have become almost the staple of recent writers. All sorts of freaks, all kinds of doctrines, have trooped down to the footlights. Sometimes it seems as if the inmates of all the insane asylums had been given unlimited paper and ink and bidden to write. The morbid, the vicious, the obscene, the ugly have had, under one pretence or another, a hearing. Nothing is respected, for there prevails the feeling that the past is played out. Along with this goes the presumption that truth must be sought chiefly in the abnormal and the odd.

During such a period Longfellow's wholesomeness, his insistence on the elemental human qualities which fashion cannot change nor fads distort, seem almost naïf. So too his clarity — he wrote hardly a line over which philologists could wrangle — is suspect to a generation which regards only riddles as significant, and confounds pathology and poetry. The crav-

ing for problems, the disdain for clarity, so symptomatic of the time, have led us to undervalue the plain unvarnished tale, and to overestimate the complex motive, the neurotic emotion, the howl and froth of gusty passions. Such a virtue as self-restraint has been almost eclipsed by the habit in which verse-men and story-writers and journalists have indulged of ranting over every ache and pain. So a man who, like Longfellow, maintains his self-control even in poignant grief, is set down as cold. But here, too, the enduring verdict will be with him.

Finally, there has been a marked development of metrical technique, especially on the lyric side, which has created a presumption against poetry that appears too straightforward, that has neither intricate cadence, nor luscious epithet, nor phrase bizarre. Without denying that some of this modern metrical growth represents an advance, I suspect that much of it indicates a real weakness and has no more to do with the essence of poetry than has patchouly or musk with beauty in women. Some of us prefer women unscented and we carry this simple Puritan preference into poetry. At any rate, Longfellow ranks, merely as a metrical artist, as one of the few English-writing masters of the Victorian age. Judge him by the range and variety of his metrical achievement, and you will find that only Tennyson and Swinburne have surpassed him, and Swinburne, in spite of all his extraordinary facility as a metricist, has said so little! (Where, indeed, shall we find any other poet who has required so many volumes for saying so monotonously little?) On the metrical side, therefore, not less than in the substance of his poetry, Longfellow has the qualifications of a national poet. He employs successfully the great historic metres of our race, he has his own dower of artistic beauty, but there is about him nothing finical nor rococo, nothing that suggests the fleeting wonders at which faddists rise up and worship.

Who shall compute the great gifts he brought us? He put into the finest ballads produced in America some typical episodes. He wrote not only the best sonnets ever written in America, but sonnets which are among the best in English. He made the best metrical translation of "The Divine Comedy." He wrote the epic of the Indian, which, though it may too much idealize its subject, will remain unapproached,

for the time is past when that theme is likely to commend itself to a great poet. He embalmed in verse the life of the first settlers, the fortunes of the men of Plymouth, the tranquil joys and tragic end of the French at Acadie. He immortalized many a spot by pouring upon it the elixir of poetry. He commemorated friends whose lives have become a part of our history. He embodied the national ideals of the Settlers and of the Founders — those ideals which made us Yankees; he embodied also the ideals which are making the new generations cosmopolites — Americans in whom blend the traits of many races. Happy are we in such a national poet! No line of his need be expurgated, no thought of his that may not contribute to the upbuilding of nobler men and women, the prerequisites of a nobler nation. And perhaps his most precious gift was his art. By that he beautified the experiences of daily life and gave radiance to culture; by that he touched with a tender and holy awe the mysteries amid which our lives are set. Art seemed so long the one thing lacking here! Longfellow proved that when an American possesses it in large measure his countrymen will respond.

MR. BLISS PERRY read the following extract from a longer paper which he had prepared for use elsewhere: —

There is no formula which adequately explains and comments upon Longfellow's career. It is apparent that he possessed, to a very notable degree, an instinctive literary tact. He knew, by a gift of nature, how to comport himself with moods and words, with forms of prose and verse, with the traditions, conventions, unspoken wishes of his readers. Literary tact, like social tact, is more easy to feel than to define. It does not depend upon learning, for professional scholars conspicuously lack it. Nor does it turn upon mental power or moral quality. Poe, who could not live among men without making enemies, moved in and out of the borderland of prose and verse with the inerrant grace of a wild creature, sure-footed and quick-eyed. Lowell, whose social tact could be so perfect, sometimes allowed himself, out of sheer exuberance of spirits, to play a boyish leap-frog with the literary proprieties. The beautiful genius of Emerson often stood tongue-tied and awkward, confusing and confused, before problems of literary behavior which to the facile talent of Dr. Holmes were as

simple as talking across a dinner-table. But Longfellow's literary tact was always impeccable: he divined what could and could not be said and done under the circumstances; he escorted the Muses to the banquet hall without stepping on their robes; he met the unspoken thought with the desired word, and — a greater gift than this — he knew when to be silent.

It is possible to misjudge this fineness of artistic instinct, this professional dexterity. Browning, who analyzed, and perhaps over-analyzed, Andrea del Sarto as the "faultless painter," has, by dint of forcing us to consider what Andrea lacked, made us too forgetful of what he really possessed. Once made aware of the Florentine's limitations in passion and imagination, we tend, under the spell of Browning's genius, to give him insufficient credit even for his grace in composition, his pleasant coloring, his suave facility. And it is true that the greatest painters have something which Andrea somehow missed. No doubt the most masterful poets have certain qualities which we do not find in Longfellow. But that is no reason for failing to recognize the qualities which he did command in well-nigh flawless perfection. There are candid readers, unquestionably, who feel that they have outgrown him. It may be that these readers are naturally passing on from room to room of the endless palace of poetry. It may be that they seek a ruder, more athletic exercise of the mind than Longfellow offers them, and that they find this stimulus in Browning or Carducci or Lucretius. Concerning such instinctive preferences there can be no debate; the world of letters is fortunately very wide. But sometimes, it is to be feared, a loss of enjoyment in Longfellow is the symbol of a lessening love for what is simple, graceful, and refined.

These characteristics of Longfellow's art were rooted in his nature. Here is an entry from his Journal, on August 4, 1836: "A day of quiet and true enjoyment, travelling from Thun to Entlebuch on our way to Lucerne. The time glided too swiftly away. We read the 'Genevieve' of Coleridge and the 'Christabel' and many scraps of song, and little German ballads of Uhland, simple and strange. At noon we stopped at Langnau, and walked into the fields, and sat down by a stream of pure water that turned a mill; and a little girl came out of the mill and brought us cherries; and the shadow

of the trees was pleasant, and my soul was filled with peace and gladness." Nowadays many a tourist motors through Switzerland without ever discovering the valley of Langnau; or, whirling past it, has no desire to rest under the shadow of the trees by that stream of pure water. Indeed, it would be foolish for the hurrying tourist to tarry there. He would not find in himself, as Longfellow did, a new peace and gladness; and, besides, he might miss his dinner in Lucerne.

A clear transparency of spirit, an *anima candida* like Virgil's, an unvarying gentleness and dignity of behavior, — these were the traits which endeared Longfellow to those who knew him. The delicacy of his literary tact was one secret of his welcome, but the deeper secret — though this too was an open one — lay in the beauty of his character.

Those of us who once begged for Mr. Longfellow's autograph, or besieged, shyly or brazenly, the always open door of his home, can do no more than transmit our own impression of his personality. The coming generations will select their own poets, in obedience to some instinct which cannot be divined by us. For myself, I have no doubt that Americans, in a far distant future, will look back to the author of "Evangeline" and "Hiawatha" as we look back to his favorite Walter von der Vogelweide, a Meistersinger of a golden age. Now and again, very likely, he may be neglected. He is already thought negligible by some clever young men of over-educated mind and under-educated heart, who borrow their ethics from the cave-men, their philosophy from the raft-men, and who, in the presence of the same material from which Longfellow wrought delightful poetry, — the same landscape, the same rich past and ardent present and all the "long thoughts" of youth, — are themselves impotent to produce a single line.

But Longfellow's reputation may be trusted to safer hands than theirs. There can be no happier fortune than that which has made him the children's poet. These wise little people know so well what they like! They are untroubled with scruples and hesitations. With how sure an instinct do they feel — without comprehending or analyzing — the note of true poetry! If there were a language for such childish secrets, the sweet voices that recite with delicious solemnity "The Children's Hour" might tell us more about Longfellow than we professional critics know, with our meticulous pedantry,

our scrutiny of "sources," our ears so trained to detect overtones that we lose the melody.

The children go to the heart of the matter. And so do many of those larger children, — the men and women of simple soul who keep an unsophisticated way of looking at the world. There are some very highly organized persons who amuse themselves with poetry as they would with chess, or Comparative Religion, or "The Shaving of Shagpat." They can criticise and expound verses, and invent theories of poetics, and compile anthologies. But these valuable members of the intellectual community are not the real readers of poetry. To find the true audience of a Heine, a Tennyson, a Longfellow, you are not to look in the Social Register. You must seek out the shy boy and girl who live on side streets and hill roads, — no matter where, so long as the road to dreamland leads from their gate; you must seek the working-girls and shop-keepers, the "school-teachers and country ministers," who put and kept Longfellow's friend Sumner in the Senate; you must make a census of the lonely, uncounted souls who possess the treasures of the humble. These readers are sadly ignorant of Ibsen and Bernard Shaw and Fogazzaro, but when the conversation shifts to Shakespeare they brighten up. They know their Shakespeare, and they know Longfellow. They are sometimes described as the intellectual "middle class," but a poet may well say, as a President of the United States once said of a camp meeting at Ocean Grove: "Give me the support of those people, and I can snap my fingers at the rest."

It is folly to worship numbers. But it is a deeper folly not to perceive that among the uncritical masses there may be a right instinct for the essence of poetry. It is glory enough for Longfellow that he is read by the same persons who still read Robert Burns and the Plays of Shakespeare and the English Bible. Until simplicity and reverence go wholly out of fashion he will continue to be read. In that quaint Flemish city which Longfellow's verses have helped to make famous there is a tiny room in the Hospital of St. John, in which are treasured some of the loveliest pictures of Hans Memling. The years come and go in Bruges; the streets and canals grow quieter here, noisier there, than they used to be; the belfry that Longfellow admired looks down to-day on advertisements of Sunlight Soap and American Petroleum. Yet in that

hushed room in the inner courtyard of the Hospital visitors still linger entranced, as of old, over Memling's Marriage of St. Catherine, his Adoration of the Magi, and his Shrine of St. Ursula. Purity of color and of line are there, delicate brushwork, a charming fancy, a clear serenity of spirit; they are masterpieces of a born painter whose nature was also that of the dreamer, the story-teller, the devotee. There are Venetian and Roman painters far greater than Hans Memling. And there are poets whose strength of wing and fiery energy of imagination are beyond Longfellow's. But no truer poet ever lived.

Messrs. WILLIAM W. GOODWIN, SAMUEL A. GREEN, and FRANKLIN B. SANBORN gave some personal reminiscences of Mr. Longfellow; and Dr. GREEN read the following note:

A singular mistake was made in connection with the name of Longfellow in a "Handbook of Fictitious Names" (London, 1868), by Olphar Hamst. It is there said that Joshua Coffin was a pseudonym of Henry W. Longfellow, who appears, according to the Handbook, as the author of the History of Newbury, Massachusetts. In this neighborhood where during his lifetime Mr. Coffin was well known as an accurate scholar of local history and as an early member of the Historical Society, the misstatement created no confusion. Olphar Hamst is an anagram of Ralph Thomas, the real name of the author of the "Handbook." A clew to the origin of the error is found, doubtless, in the first volume of Allibone's "Dictionary of Authors" (page 401), where this entry is made: "Coffin, Joshua. See Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth." As the volume of Allibone giving an account of Longfellow and his Writings had not been published when the "Handbook" first appeared, the author would naturally infer that Joshua Coffin was a pseudonym; and this inference led to the blunder.

The PRESIDENT read parts of the following paper:—

Anything even remotely suggestive of a discordant note now struck in the midst of what I sincerely consider a most thoroughly deserved recognition would certainly be much out of place. I will say at once that to my mind it is doubtful whether any other American writer has contributed to the innocent intellectual enjoyment of so many people in a degree at all comparable to that which it was the good fortune of Mr. Longfellow to contribute. I could not, indeed, name any other of our writers, or, so far as my knowledge goes, I might

add any writer without word of limitation, who in this respect should be put even in the same class with him. This is saying a great deal; none the less, I think I could find justification in saying it. Longfellow, moreover, has given a distinct name and legendary character to an American region; almost as distinctive a name and significance as Sir Walter Scott and Burns have given to localities connected with them. We speak of the Burns country, of Melrose and of Abbotsford as being in the Walter Scott country, and every one knows what is designated thereby. The localities are consecrated. So also we in America now speak more and more of the Evangeline country, meaning thereby a certain definite district in Nova Scotia which otherwise would be unknown, — certainly in no way distinctively individualized. Now, however, it is an association; a literary classic has thrown a veil of poetic romance over surroundings otherwise far from either romantic or poetical.

Nevertheless, while recognizing this, and not in the slightest degree seeking to detract from a loving acknowledgment of Longfellow's great contributions to our somewhat meagre legendary and poetical lore, I cannot wholly ignore the fact that this, after all, is an historical society — that history is our field; and, while Mr. Longfellow was essentially a poet, he was also a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society. As a poet, also, he drew on history and historical localities for his material and inspiration; but I am afraid I cannot go the full length of my predecessor in this chair, when announcing to the members of the Society the death of their associate. Dr. Ellis, in the absence of Mr. Winthrop, then remarked — “But few of our associates, in its nearly a century of years, can have studied our local and even national history more sedulously than did Mr. Longfellow.”¹ I, unfortunately, feel compelled, on the contrary, to say that, dealing with historical themes, Mr. Longfellow by no means did so in an historical spirit; for it so chances that I individually have come with most exceptional frequency in somewhat sharp contact with Mr. Longfellow in those excursions and raids of his into our prescriptive domain. This has occurred on four occasions at least; and it is somewhat difficult for me to say which of the four occasions proved, from the historical point of view, most

¹ 1 Proceedings, vol. xix. p. 268.

disastrous to the facts. The four were as follows: (1) in connection with the poem "Evangeline"; (2) in connection with the poem entitled "The Courtship of Miles Standish"; (3) in connection with that one of the "Tales of a Wayside Inn" known as "The Rhyme of Sir Christopher"; and (4) in connection with that other poetical tale entitled "Paul Revere's Ride."

The two former are, of course, the most considerable of these productions; also, historically, the most notable. "Paul Revere's Ride" is by far the most familiar. Now, it has so chanced that my attention has by peculiar conditions been drawn to the historical facts and localities connected with all these effusions, though more especially with those of the three last, to wit, "The Courtship of Miles Standish," "The Rhyme of Sir Christopher," and "Paul Revere's Ride." With each I have had personally to do.

I will pass over "Evangeline." Though it was published in 1848, and I distinctly remember hearing it read when fresh from the bookseller's counter, it was not until 1905, or fifty-eight years later, that I did what Mr. Longfellow never did, that is, visit the "Evangeline Country." This was in June, eighteen months ago, and I went, in company with our associate Mr. Arthur Lord, to attend the tercentennial celebration of the De Monts and Champlain settlement of Annapolis Royal, representing this Society.¹ While there, and passing through the very region wherein the scene of the poem was laid, — the now classic Grand Pré, — I could not but experience a sense of regret that Mr. Longfellow had not, before writing the poem, taken the trouble to go into that region, and there acquire that subtle sympathy which can only be described as local atmosphere. The region I found quite different from what I had imagined from merely reading the poem; and I cannot but think that the poem, elevated and admirable as it is, would in many of its features have been better, because more to the manner born, had Mr. Longfellow himself visited the localities and there looked more carefully into the records connected therewith, instead of taking a familiar Nova Scotia episode for his subject and evolving his inspiration in his library chair. He would then have inhaled his inspiration from the soil and the forest. But on

¹ 2 Proceedings, vol. xviii. p. 371.

this I do not propose to dwell ; for, individually, I have had no occasion to familiarize myself either with the localities concerned or with the historical facts on which the poem was based. It has not been so with the three other poems to which I have alluded. They all come, so to speak, within my peculiar historical bailiwick.

In the first place, Miles Standish:—Longfellow there found the motive of his poem in a really important historical incident in early Massachusetts history,—the single conflict in which Miles Standish ever became involved with the aborigines, the results of which affected the history of Plymouth and the Massachusetts Colony for years subsequent to the first settlement. The scene of this conflict was at Wessagusset, in what is now the town of Weymouth. Wessagusset, also, it so chanced, and its early settlement, were the theme of my first effort in the historical line,—an effort which led not long after to my becoming a member of this Society. The two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of Weymouth was celebrated in 1874. I, to my great surprise, was invited to deliver the address on that occasion. I did so; and, thirty years later, I was again invited to address the Weymouth Historical Society. I then went over the ground once more, reviewing my own earlier and more immature performance. Quoting, on this second occasion, some twoscore lines from that part of Longfellow's poem entitled "The March of Miles Standish," descriptive of the conflict which occurred within sight of the hill-top on which the earlier anniversary was observed, I thus went on:—

"We all recognize in these cases what is known as 'poetic license.' It is the unquestioned privilege of the poet to so mould hard facts and actual conditions as to make realities conform to his idea of the everlasting fitness of things. On the other hand, it is but fair that, in so doing, the artist should improve on the facts. In other words, he should at least not make them more prosaic, and distinctly less dramatic, than they were. In the present case, I submit, Longfellow, instead of rendering things more poetic and dramatic, made them distinctly less so. This I shall now proceed to show.

"And here let me premise that it was the habit of Longfellow, as I think the unfortunate habit, to improvise—so to speak, to evolve from his inner consciousness—the local atmosphere and conditions of those poems of his in which he dealt with history and historical

happenings. It was so with 'Paul Revere's Ride'; it was so with the episodes made use of in the 'Tales of a Wayside Inn'; it is notorious it was so in the case of 'Evangeline' and Acadia; it was strikingly, and far more inexcusably, so in the case of 'Miles Standish' and Plymouth. While preparing a poem which has deservedly become an American classic, as such throwing a glamour of romance over that entire region to which it has given the name of the 'Evangeline Country,' Longfellow never sought to draw inspiration from actual contact with that 'forest primeval' of which he sang; nor again, when dealing with the events of our own early history, did he once visit, much less study, the scene of that which he pictured. He imagined everything. I gravely question whether he even knew that the conflict he describes in the lines I have just quoted took place on the shores of Boston bay, and at a point not twenty miles from the historic mansion in which he lived and the library where he imagined. He certainly, and more's the pity, never stood on King-oak hill, or sailed up the Fore-river.

"What actually occurred here in April, 1623, I have endeavored elsewhere to describe in detail, just as it appears in our early records. Those curious on the subject will find my narrative in a chapter (vi) entitled 'The Smoking Flax Blood-Quenched,' in a work of mine, the matured outcome of my address here in 1874, called 'Three Episodes of Massachusetts History.' To that I refer them. Meanwhile, suffice it for me now to say, the actual occurrences of those early April days were stronger, more virile, and infinitely more dramatic and better adapted to poetic treatment,—in one word, more Homeric,—than the wholly apocryphal and somewhat mawkish cast given them in the lines I have quoted. Indeed, so far as the incidents drawn from the history of Weymouth are concerned, the whole is, in the original records, replete with vigorous life. It smacks of the savage; it is racy of the soil; it smells of the sea. It begins with the flight of Phineas Pratt from Wessagusset to Plymouth, his loss of the way, his fear lest his footprints in the late-lingering snow-banks should betray him, his nights in the woods, his pursuit by the Indians, his guidance by the stars and sky, his fording the icy river, and his arrival in Plymouth just as Miles Standish was embarking for Wessagusset. Nothing then can be more picturesque, more epic in outline, than Standish's voyage, with his little company of grim, silent men in that open boat. Sternly bent on action, they skirted, under a gloomy eastern sky, along the surf-beaten shore, the mist driving in their faces as the swelling seas broke roughly in white surge over the rocks and ledges which still obstruct the course they took. From the distance came the dull, monotonous roar of the breakers, indicating the line of the coast. At last they cast anchor before the desolate and apparently deserted block-house here in your Fore-river, and presently some woe-begone strag-

glers answered their call. Next came the meeting with the savages, the fencing talk, and the episode of what Holmes, in still another poem, refers to as

‘Wituwamet’s pictured knife
And Pecksuot’s whooping shout’;

all closing with the fierce hand-to-hand death grapple on the blood-soaked, slippery floor of the rude stockade. Last of all the return to Plymouth, with the gory head of Watawamat, ‘that bloody and bold villain,’ a ghastly freight, stowed in the rummage of their boat.

“The whole story is, in the originals, full of life, simplicity and vigor, needing only to be turned into verse. But, in place of the voyage, we have in Longfellow’s poem a march through the woods, which, having never taken place, has in it nothing characteristic; an interview before an Indian encampment ‘pitched on the edge of a meadow, between the sea and the forest,’ at which the knife scene is enacted, instead of in the rude block-house; and, finally, the killing takes place amid a discharge of firearms, and ‘there on the flowers of the meadow the warriors’ are made to lie; whereas in fact they died far more vigorously, as well as poetically, on the bloody floor of the log-house in which they were surprised, ‘not making any fearful noise, but catching at their weapons and striving to the last.’ And as for ‘flowers,’ it was early in April, and, in spots, the snow still lingered!

“That Longfellow wrote very sweet verse, none will deny; but, assuredly, he was not Homeric. At his hands your Weymouth history failed to have justice done it. The case is, I fear, irremediable.”¹

The original address at Weymouth, to which I have referred, was prepared and delivered in July, 1874. A year later I became a member of this Society. Almost the first among the many papers I have since submitted to it was one growing out of that Weymouth address of mine, and it related to Sir Christopher Gardiner. This time, also, the locality involved was distinctly within my bailiwick; for, while Wessagusset lay in full view to the south from the windows of the house in which I lived in Quincy, to the north, and about an equal distance off, was the Neponset River; and it was on the Neponset, as I subsequently on more careful investigation was led to conclude, Sir Christopher Gardiner established himself. Becoming interested in the mysterious Sir Christopher and his somewhat nebulous female companion, I prepared a paper thereon, which at the time met with warm acceptance here,

¹ Weymouth Historical Society (No. 3) 1905, pp. 120-123.

and can now be found in our Proceedings.¹ In the development of my narrative I again here came in contact, and generally in collision, with about all the poets, romancers and historians known in our Massachusetts literature, for the list included Hawthorne, Whittier, John Lothrop Motley, John G. Palfrey, James Savage, and, finally, Longfellow; and, concerning Longfellow's contribution to the Gardiner legend, I expressed myself as follows:—

“Mr. Longfellow, on the other hand, in his treatment of the story, fairly revels in that glorious indifference to facts, dates and seasons which from time immemorial has been the poet's right. He depicts Sir Christopher as wearing, in 1631, a ‘Prince Rupert hat with ostrich plume’; and then refers to Mary Grove as ‘A little lady with golden hair,’ whom ‘the marshal on his gallant steed, followed by all his bailiffs bold,’ goes out to arrest. As there was no road to the Neponset at that time, and as all we know of the arrest is that the officers attempting it went by water, it would thus seem that they must have been a detachment of Governor Winthrop's horse-marines. The most surprising feature of all in the affair was, however, that the ‘marshal’ found the ‘little lady,’ in the early days of March and only six miles from Boston,

‘Gathering, in the bright sunshine,
The sweet alyssum and columbine.’

and this ‘little lady,’ he goes on to tell, was by the magistrates subsequently

‘Sent away in a ship that sailed
For merry England over the sea,
To the other two wives in the old countree.’ ”

As to the hair of the female here in question, the record, so far as known, is silent. It may or may not have been “golden” in tone; the poet is, therefore, free to make it of such color as best commends it to his purpose. The reputation of the “little lady” at the time was not above question; and, though she has since figured largely in romance, she was not “sent away in a ship” either to “merry England” or elsewhere; but subsequently she married a resident of the province, of Maine, and finally died in Boston, some twenty-five years later. Her demise was prosaically recorded as that of plain Mary Purchase.

It must be conceded that the facts in the case of Sir

¹ 1 Proceedings, vol. xx. pp. 60-88.

Christopher and his companion do not lend themselves to poetic treatment. According to the canon I have laid down, therefore, Mr. Longfellow stands justified, so far as they are concerned. History, nevertheless, emerges from the tussle in a somewhat dishevelled and altogether demoralized condition.

So I pass on to "Paul Revere's Ride." Every prominent citizen of Massachusetts who has ever performed his tour of public duty as member of a school committee has had to listen to declamatory renderings of "Paul Revere's Ride" until probably he has grown, like myself, to entertain a frequent secret wish that Paul Revere had never existed, or, if he needs must have existed, that he had broken his neck before he ever set out on that historic midnight ride. It is now the most familiar of revolutionary legends. It is indelibly stamped into the youthful mind and memory.

It so chanced, however, that, having listened to the legend through a long series of years, in many school visitations, I, in 1893, moved from my Quincy bailiwick, so closely identified with Miles Standish and Sir Christopher Gardiner, to my present bailiwick in the town of Lincoln. Distinctly, it was a removal from the Longfellow historical frying-pan to the Longfellow historical fire; for, hardly had I settled myself in Lincoln, when again I came in contact with the poet. He was trespassing on my new premises, even as he had trespassed on the old. To my utter surprise I learned that Paul Revere's ride lay through the northern part of Lincoln; and, moreover, that within Lincoln limits his famous ride had come to a premature and rather ignominious close, — a fact, by the way, which I could not recall having seen mentioned by the poet. Shortly an article appeared in the warrant for the annual town meeting, the result of a move made by certain patriotic citizens to have a tablet, or memorial, placed on the roadside at the point where the ride of Paul Revere closed. I next found myself named at the head of this committee. Accepting, of course, the duty thus imposed upon me, with the assistance of our former associate the Rev. Edward G. Porter, I proceeded to inform myself upon the details of the ride and the localities connected with it, so far as Lincoln was concerned. You will remember that Mr. Longfellow, in his poem, in describing the tramp of the hurrying steed, dwells

upon the hour at which "he crossed the bridge into Medford town," and again on the hands of "the village clock" as they marked the time when "he galloped into Lexington"; and, finally,

"It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown."

It is a pretty picture, and it has passed into history. It is useless — perhaps it is not worth while — to dwell upon the actual facts of the case. But it so happened, as matter of history, that Paul Revere never got to Concord, either at two o'clock in the morning or at any other hour of that memorable April day. On the contrary, his ride came to an abrupt end, at about two in the morning it is true, but some four miles before getting to the Concord bridge, and at a point in Lincoln just beyond the Lexington line. He there, unfortunately as inadvisedly, quietly rode into the midst of a mounted British patrol, which had gone out from Boston the night before in anticipation of the move arranged for the next day, and established itself at the point in question, with the very object of preventing an alarm being spread. Nor did this extremely matter-of-fact patrol pick up Paul Revere alone. On the contrary, Paul Revere had for some time in that part of his ride been quietly jogging along in company with two others, Dr. Samuel Prescott, of Concord, and William Dawes, of Boston, unquestionably giving the alarm from house to house as they went, but proposing to reach Concord in the later morning hours. In this case again what really occurred was less picturesque, perhaps, but quite as well adapted to skilful poetic treatment as the Longfellow rendering.

Unexpectedly halted by the British patrol, one of the three riders, Dr. Prescott, turning quickly, leapt his horse over a stone wall into the adjacent field; and there following a path familiar to him, made his hurried way to Concord. Dawes, turning back, effected his escape. Revere alone was arrested, threatened, and held in restraint until morning. Then released, he quietly went back to Lexington, where he joined Adams and Hancock. Prescott, riding into Concord before

the break of day, from that point spread the alarm. The minutemen swarmed in response to it.¹

Such are the historic facts; and, after all, historic facts are — historic facts! So far as Sir Christopher Gardiner and his woman associate are concerned, they are of little consequence. "The splinters and the accidents" of a critical period, they seem providentially provided for the use of poets and novelists. It is not so with Paul Revere; much less is it so with Miles Standish. They were part of memorable historic episodes. Somewhat unfortunately, it seems to me, the historic facts connected with those episodes have been lost, and popularly forever lost, through the license of poetic treatment. For me, or any other historical investigator or writer of history, to attempt to set forth the correct happenings, in hopes of a popular future acceptance thereof, is about as futile as if, on a fresh day in September, he or I were to step outside the house door and try to whistle down a north-west wind. The glamour of legend and poetry will not be exorcised. Moreover, as I have already intimated, Mr. Longfellow in each of those instances, whether from the poetic or the historical point of view, failed, in my opinion, to improve upon what actually took place.

As I said when I began, I now refer to the matter not from any desire to find fault, or in the vain expectation that a memorandum such as this put on file in our Proceedings will ever produce an appreciable effect. Nevertheless, on such an occasion as the present, when the centennial of the poet is sympathetically observed in the Historical Society of which he was a member, it seems not altogether inappropriate, or in any way out of place or disrespectful, to enter a mild caveat on the subject of these poetical incursions into the domains of recorded fact. In all cases, at any rate, where the truth of history would equally well serve the purposes of either poetry or fiction, would it not be better if poet and novelist would study the record and, so far as may be, hold to it?

Mr. SANBORN submitted some new facts concerning the "American Farmer," tending to show that he was a neutral, inclining to toryism, in the early years of the American Rev-

¹ An account of the Celebration by the Town of Lincoln, Mass., April 23, 1904, of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of its Incorporation, 1754-1904, pp. 230-233.

olution, while he was living on his farm in Orange County, and before the Tory Governor of New York had prevailed on the British ministry, early in 1779, to allow unrestrained raids by the New York Indians on the colonists of the frontiers of civilization. Practically St. John was one of these "frontiersmen" whose woes he so feelingly described in the last chapter of his English "Letters from an American Farmer," first published in London in the spring of 1782. At Christmas, 1778, Governor Tryon wrote to Lord George Germaine suggesting several things to be done by the British ministry to complete the conquest of the rebellious Colonies, one of which was, "That the Indian nations lying between Quebec and West Florida be let loose on the frontiers of the revolted Colonies, — unrestrained excepting as to women and children."

Whether formally accepted or not, this evil suggestion was complied with, and among the sufferers were St. John's western and northern neighbors, in the spring of 1779, so that he wrote in the beginning of this last chapter of his book, —

"I wish for a change of place; the hour is come at last that I must fly from my house and abandon my farm. . . . From the mountains we have but too much reason to expect our dreadful enemy; and as they seem determined to destroy the whole chain of frontiers, our fate cannot be far distant."

St. John therefore fled from the wrath to come, left his family, and entered the city of New York under a safe-conduct from Sir Henry Clinton. Not long after he was arrested there by Clinton's order, and we have the report of the officer, General Pattison, who examined him, as given below. It shows, what I have always supposed, that St. John tried to be a neutral in the Revolution, and sided with the party he happened to be with at the time; it also throws light on his various occupations. His having once been a merchant is an explanation of some of his journeyings, — that to Nantucket, for instance, — just as his land-surveying implies journeying from place to place, even as Henry Thoreau's land-surveying took him to Haverhill and Plymouth in Massachusetts and to Eagleswood in New Jersey. The discovery that he surveyed Trinity Church lands while detained in New York, before sailing for England, shows that he continued to practise that art

so late as 1780. I have made a copy of the report to Clinton, and should like to communicate it with a few remarks.

Report of General James Pattison, July 8, 1779.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY, SIR HENRY CLINTON (at New York).

SIR, — I have the honor to acquaint you that, pursuant to your Excellency's orders signified to me by Lord Cathcart, I took the earliest occasion of having the person and papers of Mr. Hector St. John seized and secured. He was on Long Island at the time of my receiving Lord Cathcart's letter; and I sent for him in a manner that could not raise any suspicion of my intentions towards him; he immediately came to me, and I directed the Town Major and my aide-de-camp Captain Adye, to attend him to the house of the Rev'd Mr. Brown, where he is used to reside when he comes to New York. He there opened for their inspection a large trunk which, from their report, contained nothing but some few newspapers, some garden seeds and other trifles; he also put into their hands a bundle of papers containing certificates, etc., relative to his having been imprisoned and otherwise ill-used for his attachment to the Government. They likewise found a small trunk which he had put into the care of Mr. Brown, which they brought to me; it was opened and examined in my presence, and contained a great number of manuscripts, the general purport of which appears to be a sort of irregular Journal of America, and a State of the Times of some years back, interspersed with occasional Remarks philosophical. The tendency of the latter is to favor the side of the Government, and to throw odium on the proceedings of the opposite party, and upon the Tyranny of their Popular Government. I have therefore ordered the trunk to be sealed up, in my own presence, to be disposed of as you shall think proper. I have also sent for some papers he mentioned to have left in the hands of Mr. Judge Ludlow and Mr. David Colden, son of the late Lieutenant Governor of the Province, on Long Island.

The account Mr. St. John gives of himself is, — That he is a native of Caen in Normandy, but came into this country many years ago, and was naturalized; that he first went into the mercantile line, but afterwards bought a farm in Orange County, on which he settled; but was obliged to quit it about six months ago, and leave his family and property behind, on account of the persecution he underwent from his attachment to Government; and that during his leisure hours he has amused himself with making such literary observations as occurred to him, but which, he is convinced, will upon perusal do him credit in the opinion of those attached to the King's Government; that he never kept them secret from those of his acquaintance who were thus attached, but took pains, and found great difficulty, whilst among the Rebels, to

conceal them; that he has submitted many of them to the perusal of Lieut. Col. Watson of the Guards, who has occasionally made his own remarks upon them, and can vouch for the nature of their contents.

Mr. St. John is well known to many of the principal people in this place, and offers to give any security that may be judged necessary, for his good behavior and appearance. I have the honor of enclosing a letter from Mr. Smith concerning him, and beg to know if it is your Excellency's pleasure that he be released from the Provost upon Bail.

If General Pattison here quotes St. John correctly, he had extended the period of his absence from his Pine Hill farm by three months, for he did not really leave it until April, 1779, and could not, probably, have been long in New York when Sir Henry Clinton ordered his arrest. He was finally released on bail, but not, apparently, until the spring or early summer of 1780. It was during this release that he surveyed the Trinity Church lands, as recorded in Dr. Dix's book of records. He had evidently often been in the city of New York, or he would not have been so well known to "many of the principal people," like Colden, Ludlow, W. Seaton, etc. The "Mr. Smith" here cited was perhaps William Smith, a judge, who was in correspondence with Rev. Dr. Wheelock, the founder of Dartmouth College, and, like Wheelock, very averse to the setting up of English bishops in the Colonies. The Coldens were friends and correspondents of Dr. Franklin, as subsequently was St. John himself. It is probable that the "few newspapers" in St. John's big trunk were copies of his own communications in American journals, to which no doubt he contributed before our Revolution as well as afterward.

When St. John in 1783 turned into French the letters he had first published in English, and in England itself, in 1782, — but of which the originals had been written in 1779 or earlier, he added and subtracted largely from their contents, and changed their tenor in some instances. In the third Letter of the English edition, entitled "What is an American?" there are but 43 pages; and it is not dated. In the French edition it appeared as a Sketch (*Esquisse*) and had 60 pages; it was dated then at Baltimore, May 10, 1771. The French pages contain more words than the English pages; so that this letter in French covers 13,400 words, while in English there are but 9,000. In the letter describing the "Distresses of a Frontiersman," there are nearly 50 pages of the English; in

French there are less than 30 pages. The difference here is on the side of the English, which has about 10,500 words, while in French there are but 6,700. But in this shorter chapter are several pages detailing the specific acts of British commanders destroying towns and murdering inhabitants, as thus : —

“What a hideous picture could I not draw for you, if I could run over minutely this vast field of slaughter and conflagration, from the Onion River along the shores of Lake Champlain, across Charlotte County, in the region of Fort Schuyler, to German Flatts Schoharie, Cherry Valley, Peen-Pack, Menesink, — along the shores of the Susquehannah, in the valley of Buffalo and on the banks of the Juniata, — and a thousand other places.”

Although St. John knew these outrages in 1779, they did not become public until after the war, so far as this author is concerned. Still less did he publish in England while the war was going on the following remarks, which appear in the French edition (Vol. II. pp. 261, 262) : —

“Though I am far from the sea, in the midst of the forest, I can still trace on the map the stream of calamities, that have inundated this Continent from one end to the other. Wherever the English have carried war, I behold heaps of ruins, murders to no purpose. On their standards I see ‘Rapine’ and ‘Cruelty’ inscribed. I hear the shrieks and sobs of numerous families, either groaning in slavery, or totally ruined, or else deprived of the first necessities of life in their prisons. Those of our seamen who have fallen into their hands I see immured in dungeons, as if guilty of high treason, or else, to complete their misery, compelled to serve on board English war vessels, and help shed the blood of their own countrymen. Countless are the children whom the British bayonet has made orphans, all the way from Quebec to Savannah. After all, who is the most criminal, — he who crosses the Atlantic to impose unjust taxes on me at the point of his bayonet, and then, under pretext of duty, plunders me, carries off all he pleases, kills, assassinates, burns, and turns fertile fields into a desert, — or he who, with a courage guided by humanity, arms for his own defence and repels force by force?”

Instead of such things as this in the English edition we find a long disquisition on life among the Indian tribes.

Incidental remarks were made during the meeting by the PRESIDENT, Hon. WILLIAM EVERETT, Mr. GRENVILLE H. NORCROSS, and Mr. CHARLES C. SMITH.